

Message Text

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51

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-03 CIAE-00 INR-05 NSAE-00 RSC-01

DODE-00 AID-05 EB-04 OMB-01 EA-06 /036 W

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R 111545Z NOV 74

FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 142

INFO CTF SIX FIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 0028

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, EAID, ECRE, EG

SUBJECT: REMOVAL BRIDGE ABUTMENTS - SUEZ CANAL

1. ENGINEERS MARGOUSH AND EZZAT OF SUEZ CANAL AUTHORITY (SCA) CALLED POL/ECON COUNSELOR NOV 9 WITH "URGENT REQUEST" THAT USG ASSIST IN REMOVING TWO LARGE BRIDGE ABUTMENTS IN THE SUEZ CANAL AT KM 64 AND 68 RESPECTIVELY. ABUTMENTS ARE SCREW PILING AND CONCRETE CONSTRUCTION AND ARE ABOUT 20 METERS IN DIAMETER.

2. EZZAT SAID REASON FOR URGENCY WAS THAT SCA WANTED TO OBTAIN AGREEMENT FROM USG TO REMOVE ABUTMENTS BEFORE CURRENT SALVAGE

WORK WAS COMPLETED AND HEAVY LIFT CRANES DEPARTED. HE SAID MATTER HAD EARLIER BEEN BROUGHTUP INFORMALLY WITH ADM CARROLL AND CAPT BOYD. HOWEVER, SCA WAS NOW RAISING SUBJECT AS A FORMAL REQUEST.

3. EZZAT INDICATED TO POL/ECON COUNSELOR THAT REMOVAL OF THE ABUTMENTS WILL ALSO BE RAISED WITH VISITING CORPS OF ENGINEERS OFFICERS. EMBASSY WILL COMMUNICATE VIEWS OF THESE OFFICERS WHEN THEY RETURN FROM CANAL AREA.

4. COMMENT: WE UNDERSTAND BRIDGE ABUTMENTS ARE NOT IN CANAL
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CHANNEL AND BASICALLY WOULD ONLY BE AN OBSTACLE TO A SUBSEQUENT WIDENING AND DEEPENING OF THE CANAL. CAPT BOYD INDICATED TO EMBOFFS EARLIER THAT REMOVAL OF ABUTMENTS WAS BASICALLY AN ENGINEERING TASK AND DID NOT FALL WITHIN THE COMPETENCE OF SALVAGE OPERATIONS. BOYD SAID HE WOULD NOT LIKE TO SEE THIS OPERATION DETRACT FROM ONGOING SALVAGE ACTIVITIES, DRAG OUT PRESENT PROJECT OR OBSCURE ITS COMPLETION. REMOVAL OF THE ABUTMENTS WOULD BE A COMPLETELY NEW TASK AND NOT ANY EXTENSION OF THE SALVAGE OPERATION. HE FURTHER EXPRESSED VIEW THAT USE OF HEAVY LIFT VESSELS MAY NOT BE MOST COST-EFFECTIVE WAY OF REMOVING ABUTMENTS. MATTER WOULD HAVE TO BE EXAMINED IN LIGHT OF FINDINGS UNDERTAKEN BY EXPERTS WHO WOULD DEAL WITH ABUTMENT REMOVAL OPERATION.

5. AS MATTERS NOW STAND, EMBASSY HAS INDICATED TO SCA THAT WE WOULD BRING REQUEST TO ATTENTION OF APPROPRIATE WASHINGTON AUTHORITIES. HOWEVER, WE WERE NON-COMMITTAL, SINCE THIS BASICALLY IS NOT AN OPERATION RELATED TO REOPENING CANAL IN PRESENT FRAMEWORK, BUT PART OF CANAL EXPANSION PROGRAM. THE LATTER, OF COURSE, IS AN OPERATION WHICH, AT THIS JUNCTURE, IS LARGELY BEING BACKED BY THE JAPANESE.
EILTS

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NNN

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*** Current Classification *** UNCLASSIFIED

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